

BIRTHDAY GIFT OF BILLION DOLLARS

IT CAME TO JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER ON HIS SEVENTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY. THE RICHEST MAN IN WORLD.

Imagine the perturbation, the worry, the keen, malicious discomfort of John D. Rockefeller's closest confidential employees when the great oil magnate's 77th birthday drew nearer and nearer—and they had not been able to agree on a present for the auspicious occasion.

Jewelry—what could a man of 77 do with jewelry? Automobiles, motor boats, yachts, city homes, country homes, winter, summer, spring and fall homes—the boss had all varieties of everything to which their minds turned; and yet Mr. Rockefeller must have a birthday present from his closest and most trusted employees.

Frankly they considered every suggestion, and then somebody had an idea.

Why not give him a billion dollars? Mr. Rockefeller had always wanted a billion dollars. Everything in the world he ever wanted had been his—everything but the billion. Why not give it to him also?

Finding the Billion.

They took all his books, all of his private papers and for days and nights they worked, getting careful estimates on the value of everything he owned, deducting at full value every possible liability, every depreciation, every pledge to friend or public benefaction—and when they got through, they drew up a balance sheet.

And so, when John D. Rockefeller's birthday—his 77th—rolled around a few days ago, the employees, as was their wont, gathered at his office to wish him many happy returns of the day, and he who was the best spoken, man among them arose and spoke about as follows:

"Mr. Rockefeller: On behalf of your trusted employees here assembled, I wish to present to you this balance sheet, which shows that on the occasion of your 77th birthday you are worth one billion dollars, clear of all liabilities of all kinds. You are the only man in the history of the world who has accumulated a billion dollars. With all our hearts we congratulate you."

What Mr. Rockefeller said is not of record. Unquestionably he beamed, for had he not accomplished what no man in all history had ever before accomplished? Had he not acquired—or should one say, achieved—a billion dollars?

Half of the billion dollars, the sheet showed, was represented in Mr. Rockefeller's holdings in the Standard Oil company, with all its subsidiaries. Out of a total of 883,338 shares in all these companies, Mr. Rockefeller personally owns 247,692, and the stock is now quoted around \$1,700.

The other half-billion consists of enormous holdings in railroads in banks, in bonds, foreign, national state and municipal, and in stock in the United States Steel Corporation. Neither Mr. Rockefeller nor his son, John D. Jr., is actively in business now—at least, they are both said to have given up their most onerous duties. The interest at 6 per cent. on a billion dollars is \$60,000,000, so no matter how much they spend on their personal living, the billion is bound to grow to even greater proportions as the years roll on. Here are some of the things Rockefeller could do with his billion dollars:

He could build a fleet of fifty super-dreadnoughts, and make the United States navy the most powerful navy afloat.

He could pay the entire cost of building three such canals as the Panama, or ten such as the Suez.

For a full month, he could finance England in the present titanic struggle.

As terrible and costly as was our Civil war, Mr. Rockefeller alone could pay one-fifth the cost of another such cataclysm.

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